



Legislative Update

April 21, 2017

The Week In Review

This past week, the General Assembly reconvened after a short Easter recess. The session has picked up pace as the crossover deadline of April 27th approaches. The volume of bills being considered in committees has intensified in order to move bills through the process so that they can remain viable.

Relevant Bills with Action



HB 132: High Achieving Tuition Scholarships

HB 132, covered in a previous Legislative Update ([link](#)), was reported favorably by the House Committee on Community Colleges this past week. It will move back to the Appropriations Committee. This bill would create scholarships for high achieving students who are community college bound.

HB 285: Suicide Prevention/Awareness School Personnel

This bill attempts to address the tragic issue of youth suicide by directing the State Board of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services, to develop a youth suicide prevention program and a model risk referral protocol for use in public schools. School personnel who work directly with students would be required to complete the training within 12 months of initial employment, and once every two years thereafter. The training program is to include "at least two hours of evidence-informed instruction to increase awareness of suicide, identification of risk factors and signs, and information for student referral for suicide prevention resources and support." HB 285 passed the House Education K-12 Committee on Thursday and is currently scheduled to be heard by the House on Monday.

HB 305: School Boards Can't Sue Counties

HB 305 was heard Wednesday morning by the House Committee on State and Local Government I. This bill would disallow local school boards from suing their county when they believe they were appropriated insufficient county funds. The bill's sponsors -- all former county commissioners -- created the legislation as a means of maintaining good working relationships between local school boards and county commissioners. A study conducted by the General Assembly's nonpartisan Program Evaluation Division (PED) is underway, examining the effects of these lawsuits on counties. However, this bill is moving independently of the study. HB 305 passed the its hearing on Wednesday and will move to House Judiciary IV.



HB 482: County Commission Role in School Building Acquisition

This bill clarifies the role of county commissioners in the process of choosing locations for school buildings and facilities. The Commission would have to approve the location chosen by the school board to make sure the cost of the project does not exceed its budget. This bill passed the House this week and was sent to the Committee on Rules and Operations of the Senate.

HB 556: Office of Early Childhood Education

HB 556 would establish the Office of Early Childhood Education that would be administratively housed within DPI, but operate independently. This office would be tasked with "developing and implementing a plan for a coordinated system of early care, education, and child development services with a focus on program outcomes for children from birth to 8 years of age." The office would also offer recommendations to the General Assembly on how to increase efficiencies in the early childhood education system.

Having passed the House Education K-12 Committee on Thursday, HB 556 will be heard next in the House chamber.



HB 634: Private Alternative Teacher Preparation

This bill would provide additional options for lateral entry teachers who are working toward a teaching license. HB 634 authorizes the State Board of Education to approve "alternative, private, nonprofit, or for-profit lateral entry educator preparation programs." The bill also directs the State Board of Education to develop criteria for approving such programs, and to approve between one and four programs that meet the criteria. The House Education K-12 Committee gave HB 634 their approval on Thursday, and it will next be heard by the House.



HB 646/SB 597: ApprenticeshipNC

As it currently stands, the Apprenticeship Program is administered by North Carolina's Department of Commerce. HB 646 and its companion bill, SB 597, would move the program under the control of the Community College System with a new name: ApprenticeshipNC. The ApprenticeshipNC program seeks to provide young people with the opportunity to learn trade skills and network with employers through apprenticeships. This program was established to help alleviate the lack of hireable individuals who are trained in some career and technical fields. Both the Senate and House versions of this bill passed their respective committee hearings this week.

HB 725: Mental Health Support Funding/Study

This bill directs the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to conduct a study on how to best use funds for mental health services in schools. The study would examine the mental health support structures in schools, which type of trainings are most effective, and how funds should be allocated to individual schools or school administrative units. The study would help inform the General Assembly as to how to fund school's mental health resources in the future. The bill passed the House this week and made its way to the Senate.

HB 833: Driver Education Oversight

HB 833 establishes the Office of Driver Education Services within the Department of Public Instruction. The State Superintendent would "organize and administer" the driver education program through this office in accordance with "criteria and standards" developed by the State Board of Education. Furthermore, the bill allows for the transfer of funds out of the driver education allotment only "for the purpose of supporting driver education in other local school administrative units." HB 833 passed the House Education K-12 Committee on Thursday and now proceeds to the House Transportation Committee.



SB 343: Increase Teacher Supplement/Electronic Notice

This bill would expand publishing of government and legal notices on the internet. Fees paid for such notices to be published on county-owned web sites would, in part, go toward funding local supplements for teachers in those LEAs. SB 343 cleared the Senate Rules Committee on Tuesday and is currently scheduled to be heard by the Senate on Monday.

SB 461: Modify UNC Laboratory Schools

Last week's Legislative Update included information about the House version of this bill, which would make changes to the UNC Lab Schools program. UNC Lab Schools were established to provide an "enhanced education program" for students in low-performing LEAs. The Senate companion to this bill, SB 461, passed the Senate Education/Higher Education Committee on Wednesday. It will next be heard by the Senate Appropriations/Base Budget Committee.



See this [link](#) for a complete list of bills impacting education.

Legislative Calendar

Monday, April 24, 2017

10:00 AM Session Convenes (Senate) [Senate Audio](#)
5:00 PM Session Convenes (House) [House Audio](#)

Monday, April 24, 2017

12:00 PM | 544 LOB [Education - K-12](#) (House)
Permit Municipal Charter School/Certain Towns. ([H514](#))
Computer Coding Course Elective. ([H534](#))
Charter School Changes. ([H779](#))
Various Changes to Charter School Laws. ([H800](#))
Student Notice/Charter School Closure/Restr. ([H806](#))
1:00 PM | 643 LOB [Transportation](#) (House)
Driver Education Oversight. ([H833](#))
2:00 PM | 423 LOB [Judiciary III](#) (House)
Juvenile/Parent Comm. Service. ([H771](#))
3:00 PM | 1027/1128 LB [Judiciary](#) (Senate)
Evidence Passed Vehicle Is a School Bus. ([S184](#))
6:00 PM | 544 LOB [Education/Higher Education](#) (Senate)
Teachers/Isolated K-12 Schools. ([S15](#))
Excellent Educators for Every Classroom. ([S599](#))

Tuesday, April 25, 2017

10:00 AM | 643 LOB [Education - K-12](#) (House)
School Construction Flexibility. ([H600](#))
Teacher Licensure/Military Spouses. ([H681](#))
Divide School Systems/Study Committee. ([H704](#))
Modify Low-Performing School Definition. ([H826](#))
Restore Longitudinal Data System Board. ([H849](#))
12:00 PM | 421 LOB [Judiciary II](#) (House)
Ltd. License/Drive to School Event Past 9:00. ([H336](#))
Retroactive Sex Offender Registration. ([H664](#))
Protect Educational Property. ([H670](#))

North Carolina General Assembly

ONLINE RESOURCES:

- [Citizen Guide](#)
- [Who Represents Me?](#)
- [House Member List](#)
- [Senate Member List](#)
- [North Carolina Constitution](#)
- [House Page Program](#)
- [Senate Page Program](#)
- [Governor's Page Program](#)
- [Educational Resources/Homework Assistance](#)
- [An Introduction to the NC General Assembly – Elementary School Ages](#)
- [NC Government – Middle School Ages](#)

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